

AB 2651 Foster Youth

THE BILL

AB 2651 will require the Department of Social Services to adopt clear anti-discrimination policies against gay foster youth or parents.

YOUTH IN THE MARGINS

Last year, the Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund produced a report, *Youth in the Margins*, on the need for the California Department of Social Services, Child Welfare Services (DSS-CWS) to set non-discrimination policies for and services specific to the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) foster care youth statewide. This review of the Department's guidelines regarding non-discrimination policies and services revealed a tremendous need to address LGBT issues.

SPECIFIC PROVISIONS OF AB 2651

This legislation will require DSS-CWS to adopt regulations explicitly prohibiting discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and HIV or AIDS status against foster care youth, foster parents and foster care staff. DSS-CWS will also be required to adopt regulations to safe guard a foster youth's access to resources that will allow them to practice their religious beliefs. Foster youth will be able to use the Foster Care Ombudsman hotline number to report harassment or discrimination. Additionally the Foster Youth Bill of Rights has been expanded to include freedom from discrimination and harassment based on race, religion, disability, or sexual orientation.

AB 2651 reinforces the right of foster youth to be treated with dignity, respect, and support. It makes clear that no discrimination will be tolerated.

If you support this legislation please send letters to:

Assembly Member Judy Chu
State Capitol, Room 5126
Sacramento, CA 95814

For more information, please contact Anita Garcia at anita.garcia@asm.ca.gov.